

Elmore County Board of Commissioners

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November 25, 1997

RECEIVED BY
AND WILDLIFE
GRIZZLY BEAR
COORDINATORS OFFICE.

Grizzly Bear Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
P. O. Box 5127
Missoula, MT 59806

DEC 01 1997

Dear Sir:

The following comments are submitted as representing the views of the county commissioners of Elmore County, Idaho. In our roles, we attempt to protect the well-being of the residents in our rural counties.

1. Alternative #1 is flawed because it delegates the authority of the USF&W to a citizen's management committee. The endangered species act does not allow delegation of authority. This committee representation is not balanced properly because Montana and Idaho have nearly equal number of members. However, over 90% of the area affected lies in Idaho.

The very title of the reintroduction proposal "nonessential experimental" states a huge argument against the reintroduction of a species that is thriving in Yellowstone Park area of Idaho, Wyoming and Montana; the Selkirks in Idaho and there is also a population in Washington.

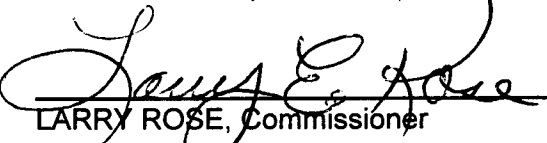
2. The managers of Idaho Fish and Game maintain alternative #2 is not viable because the area does not offer the habitat for natural recovery.
3. Alternative #3 is illegal under the provisions of the ESA. The USF&W cannot prevent natural recovery that could occur.
4. Alternative #4 would require extensive habitat protection and full protection of the bears which would require large set asides of productive natural forests. This would be extremely controversial. To place the well being of the bears ahead of a large human population would be folly. The population being those who live in Idaho who rely upon access to the national forests.
5. P. 4-11 The draft states that grazing would not be impacted. This assessment is probably not accurate given that the wolf figures were not accurate. There has been many more livestock, sheep and cattle kills than had been forecast. Recent discussion with guide service people indicates that a very probable large kill of elk calves this spring in Chamberlain Basin area in Idaho was caused by wolf packs.

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6. Paragraph two, Page 2-16 refers to salmon already being eliminated from the Clearwater drainage. The recovery area extends far beyond Clearwater drainage and into areas endangered species of salmon are present. The document completely fails to consider this issue.
 7. The idealistic, pie in the sky, type of support elicited from respondents far removed from the recovery tends to support, not in my back yard type of response. Many citizens adjacent to the recovery area indicated they would not tend to use the area where bears were present.
 8. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game have stated repeatedly that they are opposed to the proposed reintroduction of the Grizzlies into Idaho. It would seem that what is proposed could be a violation of Amendment Ten of the Bill of Rights.
 9. We oppose adoption of any of the proposed alternatives.

Sincerely,


BARRY PETERSON, Chairman


DON REYNOLDS, Commissioner


LARRY ROSE, Commissioner

ECC/lv